



# Teams of Our Lady

## NEWSLETTER



**IRISH REGION Winter 2010 (Issue 85)**

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Group at RC Weekend at Hevey Institute Mullingar

Every year since our first child was born, I have bought a new trinket for the Christmas tree. Each carries within it a capsule full of memories. The Father Christmas with a chimney was one of the first; our little boy begged me to buy it and I succumbed. It cost three punts which I felt I could really not afford. Then there is the polar bear, made from local materials in Canada rather than China, which evokes memories of my solo trip to there to see my brother before he took to the sea!. There is the lacebell from Bruges where Aodhagan and I took a very pleasant short trip via the Eurostar; the rather fierce looking 'nutcracker' from Heidelberg, where we went for a meeting and the little man with the top hat who cheered me up one year when I felt very down as I hung the decorations. I can map quite a bit of our life together as a family. Christmas and New Year are times for looking to our past, in order that we may go ahead with a healthy outlook. Janus, the Roman god of gateways, who gave his name to the month of January is two-headed so that he can both look backwards and forwards. He is, I think, a very wise old god. In the Christmas carol, the old miser Scrooge is only able to change his miserable, selfish life when the ghosts force him to re-visit his past and gain understanding of himself.

In the New Testament Our Lord likened the kingdom of Heaven to a householder, who brought out of his house things new and old (Matt 13 v51). I feel this parable can be particularly applicable to marriage. Most of us in teams in Ireland I would guess, are in our golden years and perhaps wondering where all the time went. Many of our friends and relations have died; our children have grown up and may or may not have children of their own. We ourselves have been married over forty years and are at a very different stage of our relationship than when we were students; when we were first married and living in America; when the children were small, when they were growing up, moving out and then when Aodhagan retired. Each part of our life together is like a ring on a tree; an indelible mark is left and a new ring must form.

The Old Testament invites to look back to the way in which the God of Israel revealed Himself in capsules, like the ornaments on my Christmas tree. The books of the prophets read in Advent are particularly rich in imagery. Our ecumenical group last month reflected on the book of Ezekiel and the meaning of exile, where God was no longer confined to the temple. (Ezekiel 47 v1-13). Isaiah speaks of Emmanuel - God with us. (Isaiah 7 v14). God has come to join us!.

I am always enchanted by the glitter and bright lights of Christmas which come when the year is at its darkest. However, once January has come, the first shoots are appearing and the witch hazel is showing its fragile yellow flowers. I no longer want to look at bright silver and gold, brash reds and blues. The new green is far more attractive.

We spend a huge amount of time preparing for Christmas. There are the cards and letters to write, connecting up with friends and relations, perhaps for the only time in the year; the mincemeat to make, the pies and the pudding to cook and the mounds of shopping to be done. We seem to thrive on busyness; rushing around without a minute to spare - seems to make us feel important and worthwhile. Yet is there a chance that we can miss the wonder of 'God with us' in all this frenetic activity which as I have said is so very transient. I remember a priest giving a wonderful sermon at early Mass on Christmas Day. He talked about his journey to a remote part of Ireland as a 'cold loneliness' in which he could find a space for God.

I believe that God is in all the rush and bustle, sorrow and joy of Christmas. He is in each of my trinkets. This year I bought a snowman for a euro which was made in Northern Ireland; He has knitted hat and a cheeky smile. In years to come he too will carry memories, possibly of my daughter's Finnish boyfriend who will be spending his first Christmas in Ireland with us. I do need however to stop and ponder deeply like Mary for the God that comes to us is not in enthroned majesty but as a fragile, helpless baby God who asks us to make room for Him. In my determination to get everything done and have nothing missing, I may in the words of Patrick Kavanagh\* 'be late for Bethlehem' or worse still not get there at all.

Emmanuel - God with us. A happy Christmas and as Tiny Tim observed 'God bless us everyone'.

Christmas Eve remembered - Patrick Kavanagh.

**Elizabeth Roddy,  
Corcullen, Galway.**

their beliefs in Faith. He encouraged us to read the Scriptures in a new way, conscious of what the Gospels are teaching us.

Stephen Cummins, a team member in Mullingar and working with ACCORD spoke of three aspects of marriage. It is a Calling/ Vocation. It is secondly, a great Commitment, and thirdly he suggested that it is necessary for us to give WITNESS to marriage. Stephen recommended reading 'Daring Promise', by American Richard Gaillardetz.

Paula and Gregoire Murphy from Limerick told us about how they try to pass on their Catholic Faith to their children. They refer to it as a 'Circle of Evangelisation'- Witness, Befriend, Share the Good News, attend Church functions, receive Sacraments and read the Scriptures.

Gerry and Maeve Clifford contributed a lovely talk on how they enjoy sharing their Faith with their beloved grandchildren. Father Cassidy, our Regional Chaplain, all the way from Belfast explained how he finds it rewarding to be a chaplain in the Teams; it takes time but the reward is becoming the "leaven in the dough of life" by sharing the Scriptures with families.

The Super Regional Couple, Paul and Helena McCloskey spoke to us about Teams of Our Lady in other countries.

The entire group attended Mass on Sunday at 12.30 in the Cathedral of Christ the King, adjacent to The Hevey Institute. Mass was celebrated by Father Michael Kilmartin, our own Team Chaplain and by Father Frank Monks, Killucan, also a Team Chaplain and Chaplain to our Sector. Our guests deeply appreciated their visit to the Cathedral.

The Hevey Institute was made available to us by kind permission of Joe O'Meara. Everyone helped to make the occasion interesting and enjoyable and a huge word of gratitude to all those willing helpers.

We are now looking forward to our next get-together to celebrate the feast day of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception on Tuesday, December 7th at 6pm at the Cathedral of Christ the King, with a little social afterwards for families and friends.

Happy Christmas to all,

**Frank and Margaret Fagan**

### **Galway**

We are looking forward to our December the 8th Eucharistic Celebration in the Franciscan chapel at 7.30 pm. There is always a good attendance as it is our special event before the Christmas celebrations. All team members with their families and friends are very welcome.

It was a glad occasion for us to welcome the members of the regional team to Galway recently. Fr. Gerry Cassidy celebrated the Eucharist here. At the meeting we were informed that Galway is the venue for the Responsible Weekend at the end of September 2011.

We were encouraged to be active in helping the expansion of teams in the West.

This Advent as we prepare for Christmas we are lucky to have the Christmas Market in Eyre Square. It adds to the advent spirit and has an atmosphere akin to the season.

Guimis beannachtaí na féile ar gach aon duine i Meithil Mhuire. Anseo san Iarthar mar a deir Máirtín Ó Direáin "beidh coinnlí geala i ngach fuinneog lasta, is tine mhóna ar theallach adhanta".

**Ann and Billy.**

## REGIONAL NEWS

### Dublin

While it is hard to be optimistic in these difficult times, for Teams, however, there is good news. We are witnessing a time of renewal and growth. Three new teams are being piloted at present in Sligo, Dunshaughlin and Navan. There is also a newly fledged young team in Rathmines. What better place to celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit and to thank God for our many blessings than to come together in honour of Mary, our Patron on her feastday of the Immaculate Conception at Marianella, Orwell Road, Rathgar, at 8 pm. This is an important event in the Teams calendar. We encourage everyone to make a special effort to attend. Let us raise our hearts and voices in worship and praise.

Other News: The Dublin Sector Teams retreat takes place on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th March in the Iona Centre, Knocklyon. Further details will be available soon. We had a great turnout for our Teams social evening and we are looking forward to seeing you all again on the 8th.

Love and God's blessing,

### Breda and Tony

### Belfast

Belfast 1 We recently had very tragic news of the death of one of our youngest Team members. Stephen Mc Gahan, aged 42 and married to Christianne, died suddenly on 5th November. We are all very shocked at this news and will do all in our power to help Christianne, who has two young boys, Seamus aged 20 months and Joseph aged 6 months. Christianne /Stephen met online. She is from Trinidad and he from Belfast. Stephen travelled to Trinidad, and the young couple married soon after in Ireland. They joined our team while expecting their first child and they brought new life and a fresh spirituality to all of us older people. We thank God for and appreciate Stephen's life and gift to us in Belfast 1. May God grant him peace and joy always.

We in the north have only three teams now as Greenisland 1 resigned some months ago. However we try to keep in touch by phone and will invite them to special Masses etc.

Our annual retreat which was planned for Nov 21st has had to be cancelled due to sudden fall in numbers. We will have a retreat organised for Lent 2011.

All three Teams seem to be running well - we hope to have details of December 8th celebration very soon. As regards Sector Couple we have not managed to get a replacement but hope to leave a Sector team in charge, with one couple from each of our three Teams. The idea is that these three couples will take turns to attend the regional meetings, which will mean one meeting a year each. However this plan has not yet been finalised.

We ask for prayers for Christianne, and also for a marriage in difficulties.

On a more positive note we ask prayers for Aidan/Adelle who will be married on December 11th. Aidan is a son of Charlie/Maureen from Belfast 2.

Prayers are requested for Alfie Kelly, who died recently. Alfie was 84 yrs old and the father of Cormac, who was a member of Belfast 1 with Joanne his wife.

For any of you who speak Gaeilge, there will be an article on 'Teams and Family Life' in 'An Timire' which is the Irish edition of 'The Messenger.'

I believe that this will be published early in the new year, - it was requested by Fr.Alan Mc Guckian S.J. and was written in English by Deirdre and translated into Gaeilge by Fr Alan.

With love,

### Deirdre/Declan

### Mullingar

Our recent Responsible Couples' weekend held in Mullingar turned out to be an enriching and spiritual experience. It commenced with an excellent presentation by Father Declan Hurley, who clarified for us the 'isms' that are confronting young people in Ireland to-day. Firstly Fr. Declan suggested that Secularism entices people away from a spiritual life, suggesting that all that matters is worldly success. Secondly, he explained that INDIVIDUALISM discourages compassion in a community, leaving people in isolation. Thirdly, RATIONALISM, which suggests that the only things that matter are REAL, leaving people unsure of

## From Regional Chaplain - Fr. Gerry Cassidy

### TEAMS SCRIPTURE READINGS

January - April 2011

It takes only a bit of living to know that life includes more than the experience of being loved and gifted by God. We continually see the other side of life in the drama of human misery and suffering which flashes across our TV screens and, at times, through our minds and across our hearts. We search for ways to address that painful reality.

What has death to teach us about living? The choices we make in life can be death-dealing or life-giving.

January 2011

I put my self before God and look at the contrast: God, the source of life, and I, a cause of death; God, the source of love, and I, with all my petty jealousies and hatreds; God, from whom all good gifts come, and I, with my selfish attempts to win favour, buy attention, be well thought of .....

John 11: 1-44.

What signs of the diminishment of my human powers are evident to me at this time of my life?

How am I embracing or resisting those changes?

February 2011.

When I look at my world everything seems to cooperate to give me life and strength ... air and water ....

All the produce of the earth .... Everything contributes to my well being. I think of the people who have prayed for me and love me. Everywhere I look, the more astonished I become, seeing so much good coming in on me, while I issue forth .....

Hebrews 12: 1-4 / 2 Cor.4: 7-18.

If I knew I would die tomorrow, what "unfinished business," especially with regard to relationships, would I take care of today?

March 2011

In each of us there is a desire to experience God's mercy and love because we are all caught up and influenced by the human story of sinfulness.

How can I respond to a God so good to me and surrounding me with the goodness of holy men and women and the wonderful gifts of creation?

Psalms 51 / 2 Cor.5:20...6: 2

What events and relationships of my life have carried God's mercy to me?

What are the feelings I associate with being forgiven and treated with mercy?

April 2011

All I can do is to give thanks, wondering at God's forgiving love, which continues to give me life up to this moment. Are there things in my life I would like to amend?

Luke 15:11-32 / Baruch 5.

How, through God's mercy, have I grown stronger in the broken places of my life?

In reflecting on my weaknesses and strengths, do I recognise them as leaven for God working in and through me as bread for others.

(Taken from, "Moment by Moment" C.A.Smith SHCJ. E. F. Metz.S.J.)

## From the Regional Couple



**Pat and Carmel Cunneen**

**A:**  
Try to attend the 8th December mass, annual retreat, outing, and R/C weekend if appropriate. Think of attending an outing in another sector.

**B:**  
Brasilia 2012, International Gathering of Teams Worldwide;  
Try to indicate if you have an interest in attending. Local costs of accommodation, transport are budgeted at €450. Air fares are not included in this figure. The Teams web site is [www.brasilia2012.com.br](http://www.brasilia2012.com.br)

**C:**  
Change is taking place in Teams in the Super Region ('Transatlantic') that includes Ireland. At the end of this year we will be saying 'thanks' to Paul and Helena McCloskey, who have served us as Super Regional Couple for the past 5 years and 'hello' to Antony and Janet Denman. Fr Ken Payne is also retiring as Spiritual Counsellor and is succeeded by Canon John Udris.

**D:**

Remembering deceased members of teams is a feature of 'G.B Teams' who have a wonderful 'Remembrance Book' on display at special occasions.

Proinnsias O hAilin is taking up the task of creating such a remembrance book for Ireland. He will need lots of help in this task covering names, photos, dates. Please remember Stephen Mc Gahan (Belfast 1) who died suddenly aged 42 very recently.

**F:**  
We will celebrate 50 years of Teams in Ireland in 2014. We want to give thanks for all the gifts we have received from membership of Teams. We hope to include testimonies, reflections, our memories of those who have passed away, coupled with music and song.

The event will coincide with a Super Regional Gathering of Teams, where we will welcome fellow members from G.B, Trinidad and Tobago, Malawi, and South Africa. Your ideas are most welcome to help us celebrate this occasion.

**P:**  
Piloting is under way for 3 new teams in Dunshaughlin, Navan and Sligo. The Holy Spirit is guiding new members to us at this time.

**R:**  
Responsible Couples' Weekend is tentatively scheduled for Sept 30/Oct 2, 2011, in Galway Sector. We would like to propose that all teams would fund the cost of attendance of its respective 'r/c', representing them at the weekend, a tradition lost in recent times. We hope to reissue some new, revised, R/C Handbooks in the coming months.

**W:**  
A new Irish Region web site is planned for 2011. This project is being managed by Tony and Breda Preston and please express your views on this important topic.

**Pat and Carmel Cunneen**



Peter and Jan Ralton from the Leading Team at Swanwick



*Irish Group at Swanwick with Paul and Helena. Stephen and Wendy*



*Outgoing Super Regional Couple Paul and Helena McCloskey at Swanwick*

## Prayer Intentions

**For the deceased, Stephen McGahan, Belfast, Alfie Kelly, Belfast, Hugo Gallagher's mother, Dublin.**

**For the living: Paul and Helena's son-in-law, Anthony and their daughter, Nicola.**

**The XIth International Gathering is in Brazil: -**

- o **The place: Brasilia.**
- o **The dates : 21/26 July 2012.**
- o **The title: To dare to live the Gospel.**
- o **The gospel chosen as the theme:**

**The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10, 25-37)**

The logo has also been finalised. The creation of the logo was inspired by the miraculous fishing event at the Paraíba River, in which the statue of Our Lady of Aparecida, Patroness of Brazil, was caught in the fishermen's net, giving rise to the devotion to the Virgin of Aparecida. The couple holding hands in the boat symbolizes the experience and reality of married spirituality. The boat can have several meanings: the couple who "sail together" in life, working together in the search for spirituality, in mission and service to the Church and the world. The fishing net could represent the entire world, where we are all called to live by sharing the needs, the necessities, the projects, one with another, without any difference, for the sole purpose of belonging to all humanity, beloved and saved by God. The zero of 2012 comprises two interlinked wedding rings to symbolize the sacrament of marriage, the union of the couple based on God's love. The colours green, yellow and white that form the net refer to the colours of Brazil.

Carlo and Maria Carla Volpini and Father Angelo Epis have written to invite team-members throughout the world, to start preparing for this journey that will lead us to the International Gathering of our Movement, which, for the first time takes us outside Europe. To Brazil, a country that, among the very first after France, welcomed the message of Father Caffarel with enthusiasm. Their invitation letter can be found here, but to quote part of the letter, "To be there means basically that the internationality of the Movement will have the face of thousands of team-members who, from each corner of the earth, set about finding themselves around the banquet and at the feast to which the Lord Himself calls us...."

In our Super-Region, Paul and Helena are the contact couple for information and registration and have set up a special email address for all communication about Brasilia - TA.Brazil2012@gmail.com. At this stage, the most important thing for the organisers is to get an accurate indication of the likely numbers attending. If you think there is a possibility that you may be able to come, please email TA.Brazil2012@gmail.com with your team name and contact details. This is without obligation. Initial deposits and confirmation of intention to come will be asked for during 2011

The second gathering of the Transatlantic Super Region took place at Swanwick, Derbyshire from the 8th to 10th of October. The theme was "Let Us Journey Together". Teams from the three GB Regions, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ireland were represented. Jan and Peter Ralton, from the International Leading Team, attended. The weekend was vibrant with a very full programme which included wonderful liturgies, excellent talks and mixed discussion groups and team meetings.

Antony and Janet Denman, the incoming Super Regional Couple, led a session on the 5 Love Languages, which are 1. Words of Affirmation, 2. Quality Time, 3. Giving Gifts, 4. Acts of Service and 5. Physical Touch. Later, couples had a sit down and considered these love languages with scripture excerpts and questions for guidance.

Bishop John Hine, Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark, who chairs the Bishops' Conference Committee for marriage and family life, gave a wonderful talk on Journeying as a Christian Couple in the Modern World. He referred to Lumen Gentium and the domestic church and made the point that the future of society and the church go by way of the family. In every Christian family there are all the components of the church, worship, teaching and ministry.

Peter and Di Wordsworth from Northern Britain entitled their talk "A Trip Down the Garden Path". They saw the annual review in teams as the compost heap, a bit messy but gives stronger growth in the next year. They encouraged us to read the words of Fr. Caffarel.

Jeff and Pasqui Hoford from Trinidad and Tobago gave a powerful talk on their journey as a team. They spoke of anticipation and hope. They saw four demands of brotherly love. Giving is the easiest. Receiving is a little more difficult. Asking is even more difficult and knowing how to refuse is perhaps the most difficult of all. Tenderness and trust are all-important.

Canon John Udris from Northampton gave a riveting talk on another journey, that of Saint Therese of Lisieux. "For me prayer is a surge of the heart, a simple look directed towards heaven, a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy, it is something great which expands my heart and unites me to Jesus" St. Therese. The more time you spend in prayer, the more in tune you are. It is a time to listen and to be still. Prayer as a group helps friendships.

Jan and Peter Ralton, who have been in Teams for 33 years, spoke on their involvement in the International aspects of the movement where their role is one of mission.

Finally, Paul and Helena McCloskey, who complete their term as Super regional Couple at the end of the year, shared on their personal and spiritual journey in the Teams.

On the Saturday night there was a very enjoyable social evening. Brendan Bunting was a most entertaining MC. There were many contributions of party pieces and the Irish Group distinguished themselves by demonstrating the dancing of the Siege of Ennis. Many people joined in the fun.

Fr. Ken Payne, who also completes his term as Chaplain to the Super Region at the end of the year, was the principal celebrant in the liturgies and had words of wisdom for all. In the final Eucharistic celebration he addressed the children who were present at the weekend, but who were cared for by teams volunteers while their parents attended the sessions.

From a personal point of view this was a special time, rich in friendship, love and spirituality. We came away refreshed and renewed and strengthened in our belief in the Teams movement as a way to holiness.

Paddy and Jacinta Quigley

## From the Leading Team:

Paris November 18th 2010

We are off to Brasilia together!

It has been announced, and here are the details: the next International Gathering in Brazil, result of the “blank page” presented to the meeting of Regional Couples in Rome in January 2009, is at our door:

- o The place: Brasilia.
- o The dates : 21/26 July 2012.
- o The title: To dare to live the Gospel.
- o The gospel chosen as the theme: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10, 25-37)

Another very important sign was born and will accompany us during these next two years: the LOGO for the Gathering, fruit of the work of a Brazilian team-member and selected from among other very beautiful images by the participants at the College of Madrid in 2010. It is a very beautiful image that has several meanings: we invite you to discover them in the enclosed explanatory sheet. Always keep this image in your heart; it is the image that unites us all the way to Brasilia 2012!

We invite you, team-members throughout the world, to start preparing for this journey that will lead us to the XIth International Gathering of our Movement: undoubtedly not everyone will be physically present at the final destination, Brasilia, but all will be able to participate in the lead up stages and share the experience of conversion which is always lived each time one undertakes a journey of the heart and soul.

We strongly desire that the actual participation at the meeting in Brasilia is as large as possible!

This is why we hope that each one of you, coming from all countries of the world, perceives the need and makes the effort to really be present at this extraordinary event that for the first time takes us outside Europe, to Brazil, a country that, among the very first after France, welcomed the message of Father Caffarel with enthusiasm. To be there means basically that the internationality of the Movement will have the face of thousands of team-members who, from each corner of the earth, set about finding themselves around the banquet and at the feast to which the Lord Himself calls us....

We understand that for some couples it will not be easy to plan a distant voyage and “commit” from an economic point of view! But we want to forcibly underline the witness given by fellow team-members from Brazil: their enthusiasm and their love for the Movement moved them to come to the preceding Gatherings in Europe in greater numbers. These team-members did not back away from an economic sacrifice to be able to take part in the International Gatherings of Rome, Fatima, Santiago, and Lourdes: they now await us in their home with joy and anxiety: they await our sharing the same enthusiastic response!

And we also want to stress that all the ERI, and us personally, are convinced that this International Gathering in Brazil, the first non-European one in the history of our Movement, offers us an interpretation and an answer to the signs of times: The youth of the Church, renewal of the Spirit, the strong conversion that requires us to return to the roots of our faith, it should be sought today outside this old Europe which shows all its limitations and its frailty. We are certain that these thoughts are shared by many among you

and that each team-member, each team, each Sector, each Region and each Super-Region will do their utmost so that the XIth International Gathering experiences the greatest participation from all the team-members of the world.

We said that the journey starts as soon as one starts to think about it and to prepare for it: it is there too that expectation starts. Each time something is announced, the expectation also starts. The Gospel is filled with announcements that are followed by expectations. In the same way, each person's life is a permanent expectation because the present alone is not enough for anybody, and we all look to the future, while living the

## From the Leading Team Continued

present.

The grain of wheat hidden in the ground during the long winter will grow, because it dreams of the wheat ear to come: it is this image of the future wheat ear that forces the present forwards. How often do we also live the present in a more intense and stronger way because we already see the future?

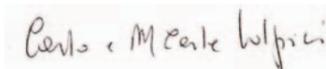
It is the same for our faith is it not? Isn't it the certainty of a future of eternity with God that gives direction to our present life and invites us to forge ahead in our daily lives?

The XIth International Gathering in Brasilia set for July 2012 therefore starts today, when the meeting becomes for each one of us a call to take part. The time of expectation also starts, a time that, if lived in-depth and with faith, will be a time of renewal and richness for all the movement. The theologian and biblical scholar Bruno Maggioni says that “the temptation for those who seek God is to always confine God's gift to their own expectation: but God does not allow himself to be confined to the expectations of man: he expands them.” For this reason the phenomenon of the International Gathering concerns all the team-members of the world and not only those that will take part in it physically. Indeed, it is only through a community walk involving all the team-members of each country of the earth, that the final meeting in Brasilia is bound to be a strong time of faith and meeting with God.

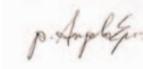
In Brazil, 18 service teams, coordinated by Roberto and Garça Rocha, have been at work for months to best bring about this great event. We express our great thanks to Graça and Roberto and all the couples who with much of love made themselves available for this service.

Your Regional and Super-Regional couples will also have all the necessary practical information at the appropriate time. Also consult the website which is being developed for this event where you will soon find all the updates: [www.Brasilia2012.com](http://www.Brasilia2012.com)

Good journey, good cheer and may God bless us all!



Carlo and Maria Carla Volpini



Father Angelo Epis